Defence Personnel on Cabinet Committee on Security

*199. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Armed Forces are not part of the Cabinet Committee on Security;

(b) if so, the reasons for non-inclusion of Defence personnel on highest decision making body of national security; and

(c) whether Government propose for their inclusion as demanded by them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) In conformity with our democratic polity, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces are represented by the Defence Minister on the Cabinet Committee on Security. Further, the Chiefs of Army, Navy & Air Force and the Defence Secretary are also in attendance in various meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Security on 'as required' basis. This arrangement is working satisfactorily.

Nepal a Conduit for Terrorism

*200. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Nepal continues to be a conduit for terrorism and a safe haven for Kashmiri terrorists and ISI agents;

(b) whether the Terai region in Nepal which borders Bihar and U.P. has become hot bed of Islamic fundamentalism;

(c) whether as many as 30 ISI agents were arrested with large quantity of RDX explosives from this area; and

(d) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (d) The Government of India is concerned about

reports indicating that ISI, with the help of Indian Extremist elements from Punjab and Kashmir are using the territory of Nepal and the Indo-Nepal border as a base for terrorist activities directed against India. Government of India has also received reports of increased activities of religious fundamentalist elements in certain pockets along the border.

Measures have been taken to enhance coopation with Nepal, particularly with regard to implementing effective border management. The concerned agencies of the two Governments remain in regular touch. There are also bilateral institutional mechanisms, such as the Joint Working Group on Border Management and Home Secretary level talks, which have been evolved to specifically develop cooperation on security matters and to address these concerns. In pursuance of the decisions taken in these meetings, both sides have agreed to take well-coordinated measures, including stepping up vigil along the contiguous border districts of India & Nepal to prevent misuse of the open Indo-Nepal border and to counter activities directed against India. As a result of this co-operation between the two countries, many terrorist conspiracies sponsored by Pakistan have been neutralized. Policing on Indo-Nepal border has also been intensified and strengthened.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Army Chief's Visit to Poland and EECs

1359. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether General V.P. Malik, the Chief of Army Staff, visited Poland and other East European Countries for ten days in early May after the Kargil intrusion had been detected;

(b) if so, whether he was aware that the intrusion had taken place but still went on this tour; and

(c) whether he did not know that the intrusion had happened?